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Environment and sustainable development

Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Secretary-General**

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/202, inter alia, the General Assembly (a) invited the relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations system and the regional commissions and organizations, within their respective mandates, to reflect measures for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[1] in their programmes and to identify measures that would ensure the effective implementation of the Programme of Action; (b) called upon Member States, in particular the donor community, as well as the relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations system and the regional commissions and organizations, to support the efforts of small island developing States in the further implementation of the Programme of Action through, inter alia the provision of adequate technical and financial resources, taking into account the Declaration[2] and review document[2] for further implementation and follow-up; (c) called upon the organizations of the United Nations system to assist small island States in their efforts to enhance their capacities to effectively utilize the benefits and mitigate the implications of globalization, including by bridging the digital divide and fostering digital opportunities in the field of information and communication technologies; and (d) urged all relevant organizations to finalize, as a matter of urgency, the work on the development of a vulnerability index.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session, under the item "Environment and Sustainable Development", the sub-item entitled "Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

Methodology and structure

3. In the preparation of the present report, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional commissions were approached for their input in response to General Assembly resolution 55/202; a number of them responded, providing a brief report of their activities since 2000, and their submissions served as the sole source of information on their activities for that period.

4. The present report also includes information on activities undertaken at the regional level by non-United Nations regional intergovernmental bodies and by a number of Governments at the national level.

II. Globalization and trade liberalization

5. Globalization has, in principle, the potential to lead to economic convergence among countries. While some small island developing States have taken advantage of opportunities for export-oriented growth in the context of globalization, others have experienced low growth or recession. Indeed, because of their geographic location, economic situation and environmental problems, many small island developing States face special difficulties in coping with the effects of globalization and trade liberalization. To help small island developing States in their efforts to develop new economic opportunities and curb the negative impact of globalization, a number of United Nations agencies have undertaken various activities.

6. The support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the efforts of small island developing States has aimed to reduce their structural economic handicaps and increase economic efficiency and competitiveness by decreasing "transaction costs". Its activities relate to trade information and electronic commerce, customs and maritime transport efficiency, and the development of relevant services as inputs to competitive exports (for example, microcredit). UNCTAD also assists small island developing States in their initiatives and policies to increase the competitiveness of existing activities, or to induce respecialization by seizing new trading opportunities. Policy advice on new trading opportunities and investment, as well as research and technical assistance on economic sectors of particular interest to small island developing States, such as those

[1] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] See General Assembly resolution S-22/2, annex.

relevant to the biodiversity and industries based on traditional knowledge and international services, are therefore needed. Particular attention is given to tourism, health services and offshore financial services.

7. Furthermore, UNCTAD helps small island developing States that are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to derive greater economic opportunities from the multilateral trade system, especially through preparations for negotiations, and helps those that are not members either to prepare for accession or to better understand what net benefits they might gain from joining that organization. UNCTAD has been actively supporting the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States.

8. As part of the effort to enhance the international competitiveness of small island developing States and facilitate their integration into the global economy, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has formulated a flagship project on strengthening national capacity in selected small island developing States to support the accelerated growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The aim of the project is the improvement of SMEs' efficiency and competitiveness, the improvement of the credit support system for SMEs, the enhancement of marketing strategies and the identification of market opportunities, as well as training in packaging techniques, the conduct of e-commerce, online transactions and e-advertisement.

9. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been carrying out a special training programme for small island developing States on the follow-up to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and the forthcoming new round of multilateral trade negotiations. The programme aims at strengthening national capacity on WTO issues to enable countries to derive maximum benefits from the existing WTO agreements and to meet their obligations. In addition, specific FAO projects target cooperation and trade facilitation within regional and subregional economic groupings. A project is being implemented with Caribbean small island developing States and another one is in the pipeline for South Pacific small island developing States. The Caribbean trade facilitation project includes Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) countries. The overall objective is to improve the food security situation in the Caribbean region by increasing the value and quality of regional agricultural produce traded.

10. To help small island developing States in their adaptation to the new global trade and market environment, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) continued to focus its efforts on the provision of comprehensive industrial policy support, including assistance in the formulation of policies for improving industrial competitiveness in export and domestic markets and the formulation of new approaches to attract foreign investments and technologies.

11. In the area of economic regulation of international air transport services, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has continued to assist small island developing States in their efforts to adjust and adapt to the changes brought about by globalization, liberalization and privatization. In addition to regular dissemination of information on trends and developments and relevant policy guidance, ICAO, took part in a meeting held in Kingston in September 2000 between the representatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the United States of America, and provided advice on possible "open skies" air services between them.

12. At the regional level, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean organized, in the context of the Free Trade Area of the Americas process, training workshops on globalization, competitiveness and standards, geared to the improvement of the quality of products for both regional and international markets. It also introduced an indicators programme, which is part of wider innovation promotion initiatives aimed at assisting policy formulation that will place small island developing States in a more competitive position globally.

13. As part of the work of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in facilitating economic and social policy analysis, an assessment of the economic and social situation of ECA island economies was prepared in 1999 and published in 2000. The aim of the exercise was to promote policy planning and help formulate strategies for the sustainable economic growth and development of ECA island countries. The recent requirements of the globalization process and trade also focused the Commission's attention on assisting African small island developing States in project formulation, implementation and monitoring in port management. ECA has conducted training and

capacity-building activities on harmonization of port statistics, data collection, tabulation, automation and analysis. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is currently conducting a study on issues relating to managing the challenges of globalization in the Pacific island countries. During 2001, ESCAP will implement a project on trade and investment promotion in Pacific island countries through effective use of information technology.

III. Information and communication technologies

14. While the processes of globalization have enhanced the level of interconnection and communication among countries, many small island developing States, spread throughout the oceans, are struggling to cope with the speed and extent of this technological transformation. The Internet bridges the vast expanse of ocean that once isolated island communities from the global market. Access to the Internet by Governments, the public and business is essential for economic development. A rapidly increasing proportion of information and services is being provided electronically and full participation in many sectors is impossible without reliable and affordable access. Despite the improvement with connectivity, very few islanders have regular access to the Internet because access costs are exceptionally high and awareness of the benefits very low. The Internet provides new opportunities to build partnerships despite the isolation of island constituents.

15. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is now hosting the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNet), which was originally established by UNDP as a result of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. SIDSNet has become an important vehicle for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and for building partnerships. In 1999, at the end of its first phase, the SIDSNet web site had developed into a central resource for small island developing States development information, with interactive tools for discussions, island news, events and virtual documents. In its current phase II, the project emphasis is on capacity-building for sustainable development information in the small island developing States regions, and aims to increase overall awareness and participation in SIDSNet of all stakeholders in the Programme of Action. Currently, SIDSNet receives over 250,000 hits per month. SIDSNet is funded through voluntary contributions and is now seriously in need of additional funding.

16. During the 2002-2003 biennium, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will be launching a cross-cutting "Small islands' voice 2004" project, which by combining existing media with new information and communication technologies will help the views of civil society on environment and development issues to become an effective catalyst for on-the-ground activities in small island developing States and provide a reference basis for the rest of the world.

17. In its efforts to foster digital opportunities in the field of information and communication technologies, ICAO has requested States that do not have the resources to invest in information technology to seek assistance through ICAO for the establishment of computer units in their local civil aviation organization in order to obtain access to ICAO information. Japan has volunteered to assist such States. In addition, ICAO has contacted the Société internationale de télécommunications aéronautiques to provide a proposal for a pilot test for the connectivity of States that have no Internet access.

18. Within the context of the African information Society Initiative and in response to the challenges of globalization and information age to Africa, ECA is now assisting such countries as Seychelles, Mauritius and Cape Verde in building small business capability in e-commerce and creating a supportive environment for its progress. During the reporting period, ESCAP, in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, organized a workshop on facilitating trade and investment using information technology. The workshop acknowledged, inter alia, that lack of institutional arrangements to coordinate information-related policies in Pacific island countries is a constraint to developing awareness in these countries.

IV. Vulnerability index

19. The present review of this topic has also been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 55/202, in which the Assembly urged all relevant

organizations to finalize, as a matter of urgency, the work on the development index.

20. The issue of vulnerability continues to be addressed through the efforts of United Nations organizations and intergovernmental bodies. UNCTAD has been taking an active part in the work of the United Nations to construct indicators that would measure the vulnerability of small island developing States. In the context of the latest triennial review of the list of least developed countries in 2000, it provided the Committee for Development Policy with vulnerability profiles of least developed small island developing States that have been near graduation thresholds. These profiles were used by the Committee as information supplementing the data derived from the cross-country indicators used for determining the list of last developed countries, in particular the new economic vulnerability index (EVI). Since 1997, there have been four cases of potential graduation from least developed countries status: Cape Verde, Maldives, Samoa and Vanuatu. The vulnerability profiles have cast light on aspects of the vulnerability of relevant States that are not measurable through the EVI. For example, in the case of Cape Verde, the profile showed a high vulnerability to instability in aid and remittances, on which the economy greatly depends. In the case of Maldives, the profile highlighted the structural handicaps caused by the smallness and remoteness of the archipelago, which magnifies the vulnerability to natural and economic shocks.

21. UNCTAD further reported that it takes the view that the EVI used by the Committee in its periodic review of the list of least developed countries is currently the best available vulnerability indicator, not only for determining the list of least developed countries, but also to measure the economic vulnerability of any developing country. The EVI, which is a composite index based on five variables and calculated on the basis of 128 developing countries, reflects the three fundamental dimensions of economic vulnerability and casts light on the intrinsic problems of most small island developing States: the economic instability entailed by external natural and economic shocks; the exposure to such shocks as measured through the degree of economic concentration; and the structural handicap of smallness, which significantly explains the economic vulnerability of small countries.

22. Giving vulnerability a broader meaning, FAO is currently working on the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS), which consists of a network of systems that assemble, analyse and disseminate information about the problem of food insecurity and vulnerability. The relatively recent development of FIVIMS could offer further inputs with regards to key indicators. Indicators to be mapped at national and subnational levels include nutritional status, food intake, basic health, reproductive health, education, public finances, socio-political crisis, population, external trade, local markets, income and entitlements, environmental disasters, climate and geophysical characteristics, main animal pests and diseases, main plant pests and diseases, agriculture, and food production and distribution.

23. At the regional level, the subregional headquarters of ECLAC for the Caribbean is currently executing a project on the theme "Development of social statistical databases and a methodological approach for a social vulnerability index for small island developing States", which will create and maintain a social database that will help build capacity at the national and subregional levels for the monitoring and evaluation of social vulnerability in the Caribbean region.

24. ESCAP undertook a project on testing of indicators for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific under which the menu of indicators of the Commission on Sustainable Development was tested in four countries of the region, including Maldives. In the next stage, the ESCAP secretariat intends to develop a project to conduct further work on vulnerability index so that environmental, economic and social/human vulnerability could be combined into a comprehensive vulnerability index applicable to small island developing States.

25. The South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) continues to focus on the vulnerability of the natural environment to both human and natural hazards. SOPAC is currently undertaking a project on an environmental vulnerability index which takes into account ongoing development and involves all Pacific countries. Environmental vulnerability profiles are being compiled for all its member countries. Several other small island developing States, including Barbados, Jamaica, Malta, Mauritius, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, have also committed their support to provide country environmental vulnerability data for future refinement and testing of

the environmental vulnerability index. The Government of Palau has reported that it successfully collected 100 per cent of the environmental vulnerability index data required by the SOPAC study. The data provided the basis for preliminary testing of the model, which was completed in February 2000 and presented in a phase II report, entitled: "Environmental vulnerability index: development and provisional indices and profiles for Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu".

26. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been contributing to the development of an environmental vulnerability index by supporting the work being carried out in this field by SOPAC. The two organizations will co-host a meeting of countries interested in participating in the environmental vulnerability index project. The meeting, which is scheduled for August 2001, aims to encourage participation and voluntary collaboration from as many targeted countries as possible.

V. Further measures for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

27. At its twenty-second special session, the General Assembly called for renewed efforts to achieve the full implementation of the Programme of Action. Many agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, have continued to assist small island developing States in their developmental efforts. For instance, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) continues, through its implementing agencies, to finance projects and programmes in small island developing States member countries. In addition to its regular activities on renewable energy, ecosystem protection and sustainable use of biological diversity, an important effort is being made in the area of international waters for the definition and implementation of a strategic programme of action on the coastal environment, freshwater resources and fisheries management in Pacific small island developing States. Similar actions are being considered for the Caribbean States, in partnership with CARICOM. UNDP continues to provide assistance to small island developing States through many of its programmes and activities (Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme or Capacity 21) and by assisting GEF in the formulation of strategies, plans and capacity-building programmes for the sustainable development of small island developing States.

28. At the national level, small island developing States have taken various measures to implement the Programme of Action. The Bahamas Government, for instance, has reported numerous actions in the areas of climate change and sea-level rise, natural and environmental disasters, waste management, coastal and marine resources, land management, energy resources, biodiversity, national institutions and administrative capacity, and science and technology. Actions include the undertaking of a study on climate change in the Bahamas, which is part of the Government's effort to develop a national action plan on climate change to meet its obligations to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the organization of two workshops in 2000, on the themes "Marine conservation and research in the Bahamas" and "Coastal zone management in the Bahamas". The workshops were geared towards public awareness and brought together scientists, professionals, students and interested citizenry to discuss environmental matters.

29. The Government of Australia supports small island developing States by funding projects and programmes that address issues covered by the Programme of Action. Australia has integrated these issues into its Pacific islands development strategy for 1999-2001. The strategy details regional and bilateral programme initiatives to support the sustainable development of small island developing States, including institution-strengthening, capacity-building, and skills and technology transfer with individual States and with key regional organizations. Canada has integrated concerns under the Programme of Action in its bilateral programming as well as in its collaborative efforts in the multilateral development system. Canada's approach is to integrate Programme of Action issues in core programmes and many of the projects funded are of a cross-sectoral nature. In addition to funding numerous bilateral projects, Canada is supporting regional indigenous organizations (CARICOM) and institutional and capacity-building initiatives in such areas as marine science, marine resources assessment, oceans policy and fisheries post-

harvest technology so as to facilitate greater ownership of programmes by partners.

30. Denmark is supporting small island developing States at the country level, as well as through regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and through UNEP. Assistance includes the funding of an SPREP project to enhance the knowledge and capacity of Pacific island Governments and their regional organizations in the field of climate change and related environmental issues, and the funding of another project on capacity-building on technological and economic integration of wind energy and other relevant renewable energy technologies into the electricity systems of Pacific island countries. The latter is being jointly implemented by UNEP, the University of the South Pacific and SOPAC.

A. Capacity-building

31. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular its Division for Sustainable Development, through the Small Island Developing States Unit, has been active in the planning and organization of a series of workshops designed as capacity development initiatives. These include a workshop on climate change, held in Samoa in July 2000, which discussed capacity-building needs in small island developing States in relation to climate change, provided country perspectives on the emerging climate change issues and provided input from the participants to the international community. This activity was undertaken jointly with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Another Department/AOSIS workshop on biosafety was held in Saint Kitts and Nevis in December 2000 to discuss country perspectives on biosafety as well as the capacity-building needs of small island developing States. AOSIS is planning for the workshop series to cover other pressing issues, including trade and the environment, with a continued focus on capacity-building needs, including skills and techniques for international negotiations.

32. In addition, the Department called on Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental groups to submit cases that demonstrated the level and the extent of their involvement in issues related to the further implementation of the Programme of Action. The stories received have been included in the fifth volume of the *Sustainable Development Success Stories*, a recurrent publication of the Division for Sustainable Development. The success stories collected have been presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development to help share positive experience and encourage information-sharing about sustainable development in small island developing States. The stories have also been posted on SIDSNet. The commitment demonstrated, the partnerships created and the results achieved acknowledge that sustainable development in small island developing States is possible and is happening. Projects and activities reported have led to tangible results and have involved partnerships among different actors.

33. The Department is currently developing a project to foster capacity-building efforts in the sustainable development decision-making process for small island developing States by establishing and enhancing institutional linkages and information flows between key sustainable development stakeholder organizations in Barbados, Maldives and Costa Rica. This is achieved through the establishment of a "twinning" arrangement between Barbados and Maldives, with institutional support from Costa Rica. The Department is also co-executing a development account capacity-building project to improve water management in selected countries of Africa and small island developing States in the South Pacific. The project will be based on a distance-learning network, and will also involve inputs from the United Nations University and the International Telecommunication Union, in cooperation with the regional commissions. The project will develop a core curriculum in integrated water resources management; identify regional and country needs in order to customize the curriculum; establish regional electronic networks; train decision makers and trainers; and link with other regions to facilitate training through a virtual learning centre for water. In addition, the Department assisted the UNDP regional office in Mauritius in developing the country cooperation framework for Seychelles. Department experts and a local consultant reviewed the national environmental management plan of Seychelles, the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, the public sector investment programme and other relevant environment and sustainable development documents and reports, and successfully submitted a country cooperation framework for consideration and endorsement by the Seychelles Government.

34. UNESCO convened an interregional workshop in Apia, Samoa, in December 2000, with participants from the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific regions, to advance intersectoral action and interlink small-island field projects and university chair/twinning activities. A main line of action to advance actions on priority areas of small island developing States and effective contribution to implementing the Declaration and review documents and other multilateral agreements and action plans is included in the organization's draft programme and budget for the 2002-2003 biennium.

35. UNIDO continued to focus its effort on the provision of technical assistance in the field of small and medium-sized enterprises policy and entrepreneurship development, and on the upgrading of small island developing States agro-industries and related technical skills. One of UNIDO's recent success stories in its support to SMEs is a project on strengthening the competitiveness of the Jamaican manufacturing sector, with special emphasis on SMEs which contributed to the achievement of the national economic goals in this area.

36. GEF concentrates its efforts on assisting small island developing States member countries in enhancing their capacity to deal with environmental degradation and global environmental management; these included the organization, in 2000, of two workshops on the topic held in Dominica and Trinidad, respectively. Two more workshops will be organized in 2001: one for Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles, and the other for Pacific island small island developing States. Furthermore, the recent GEF initiative, entitled capacity development initiative, a strategic partnership between the GEF secretariat and UNDP, was approved in response to growing demand for capacity-building to implement the climate change and biodiversity conventions and to address land degradation issues.

B. Biological diversity

37. A number of activities with special emphasis on small island developing States are carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity's programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity. An ad hoc technical expert group on marine and coastal protected areas will meet in September 2001 to consider the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas on biological diversity. The secretariat of the Convention is also actively collaborating with regional seas conventions and action plans, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA). GIWA is developing indicator-based assessment methodologies for both marine, coastal and inland waters, which will be applied regionally. To strengthen its work on biodiversity, in December 2000 UNEP established the Coral Reef Unit in its Division of Environmental Conventions, which works closely with international partners in a concerted effort to reverse coral reef degradation and to increase international, national and local support for coral reef conservation and sustainable use. UNDP supported Eastern Caribbean countries in the formulation of biodiversity strategies and actions outlining the most effective use of the countries' natural resources.

38. In order to strengthen the capacity of small island developing States in the African region to cope with marine environmental degradation, ECA is currently working with partners in the preparation of the first intergovernmental review of the implementation of GPA in 2001. The review will produce a concrete work programme for 2002-2006 on the basis of existing regional activities and priorities.

C. Natural and environmental disasters

39. Small island developing States are at risk and suffer significantly from nearly all types of natural hazards. Weather-related hazards, in particular, and their associated phenomena — rainfall, flooding, violent winds, landslides and coastal storm surges — are a serious potential threat to agriculture, tourism and fisheries. To address this issue, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has continued to provide assistance to small island developing States in the area of early-warning systems and disaster management.

40. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has continued, through its Tropical Cyclone Programme, to assist small island developing States in their efforts to mitigate tropical cyclone disasters. The programme specifically assisted in upgrading the capabilities of national meteorological and hydrological services to provide better tropical cyclone, related flood and storm surge forecasts and more effective warnings through regionally

coordinated systems. Programme activities also included the organization of workshops and seminars and the co-sponsoring of training courses, particularly for tropical cyclone forecasters.

41. UNDP has launched a risk reduction initiative for the Caribbean basin designed to strengthen capacity for disaster risk management and reduction and sustainable post-disaster recovery. It is also supporting the elaboration of a regional strategy for embedding comprehensive disaster management into the development processes of Caribbean States.

D. Climate change

42. In the area of climate change and sea-level rise, UNEP, the World Health Organization (WHO), WMO, the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United States Environmental Protection Agency funded an international workshop on climate and health in small island States for the Western Pacific region, which took place in Apia, Samoa, in July 2000, and UNIDO has been involved in the development of environmental monitoring systems, including control and avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions. UNDP/GEF supported six countries in the Eastern Caribbean in generating baseline data and advocacy on climate change issues, and helped formulate national strategies and action plans to address climate change and its adverse effects.

43. At the regional level, the Organization of American States (OAS) has reported a list of detailed projects carried out in small island developing States in the areas of climate change and sea-level rise; coastal and marine resources; freshwater resources; energy resources; national institutions and administrative capacity; regional institutions; trade; natural and environmental disasters; and hazard mitigation. Such projects include the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change project, which was designed to support 12 participating Caribbean countries in preparing to cope with the adverse effects of global climate change, particularly sea-level rise in coastal and marine areas, through vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning and capacity-building linked to adaptation planning. A follow-up to the project is under development in the form of a new project entitled "Implementing adaptation to climate variability and global climate change in the Caribbean", to be funded by GEF and other donor agencies. The main objective of the new effort is to mainstream adaptation to climate change in the development planning process of the participating countries.

44. At the national level, in January 2001 the Government of Palau established the Office of Environmental Response and Coordination to enhance coordination between all governmental and non-governmental agencies to address environmental issues. The Office is mandated to fulfil Palau's obligations under the United Nations conventions on climate change, biological diversity and desertification. Furthermore and in addition to the creation of two multi-agency committees that address global warming, Palau has conducted several multi-stakeholder workshops on energy issues, land use and degradation, marine conservation, invasive weeds, sustainable tourism and drought mitigation. Palau also planned to conduct its first greenhouse inventory workshop in June 2001, as well as a second workshop to assess the country's importation of ozone-depleting substances.

E. Coastal and marine resources

45. In the field of coastal and marine resources, the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has initiated an integrated environmental assessment of the marine and coastal areas of the Caribbean, in cooperation with the Centre for Engineering and Environmental Management of Bays and Coasts of Cuba. In addition, the Caribbean Environment Programme of UNEP is developing a number of projects, including on integrated watershed and coastal areas management and the rehabilitation of contaminated bays. In the area of emergency response and the containment of environmental damage due to accident or incident relating to maritime transport, the UNEP Regional Coordinating Unit for the Caribbean is working with the Netherlands Antilles to formalize institutional arrangements for the establishment of a regional training and information centre in Curaçao for oil spill response and contingency planning.

F. Freshwater resources

46. UNEP is initiating a pilot project, sponsored by the Government of Sweden and executed by SOPAC, to empower women in rainwater harvesting. The project will be implemented in one rural and one urban area in

one Pacific island, and is expected to commence in the second half of 2001.

47. A major WMO initiative is the development of the World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS), which aims to build the capacity of national hydrological services and promote international cooperation in addressing water resource issues. The System is being implemented through a series of regional projects. ESCAP assisted Maldives in water resources strategic planning and activities related to private-sector participation in freshwater supply, including a review of existing laws and regulations on water supply and sanitation in Maldives.

G. Transport and communication

48. Under the programme area of transport and communication, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) continued to provide assistance to the Caribbean region through, inter alia, the implementation of ongoing regional projects covering the following areas: national maritime legislation; development and updating of national and regional contingency plans to combat and control marine pollution caused by ships; assistance on maritime training; and port safety and security. Future regional projects cover maritime safety administration and prevention and control of marine pollution.

49. In the Pacific islands region, IMO is carrying out six regional programmes on oil spill response: national legislation and pollution control; monitoring and management of waste disposal; updating the South Pacific maritime code; port environmental management; and maritime administrations.

50. IMO technical cooperation activities for the Pacific islands region for the remainder of 2001 will concentrate on assisting maritime administrations in discharging their responsibilities as flag and port States, developing the new regional maritime code and improving the environmental management of port operation and ship wastes. Two future programmes have been prepared and approved for the region for 2002-2003, with the objectives of further enhancing maritime safety administration and legislation and promoting the implementation of international conventions and the regional marine spill contingency plan. The programmes will be delivered mainly through providing advisory services, updating national legislations and training of nationals in the region.

51. ICAO continued its efforts to strengthen air transport services and facilities at both the national and local levels, with particular emphasis on environmental protection, safety and innovative energy-efficient and low-cost transportation solutions, in Cape Verde, the Comoros, Barbados, the Bahamas, Bahrain, Niue and Maldives.

52. At the regional level, ECA activities in this area concentrated in the year 2000 on the effort to liberalize air transport among African countries, including Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoros. A subregional workshop on air transport liberalization was organized to develop a plan of action and to sensitize member States and bilateral donors on the issue, as well as to seek donor support.

H. Land resources

53. The issues of environmental deterioration and land degradation caused by high population pressure on scarce land resources and unsustainable agricultural practices are addressed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through projects which integrate natural resources conservation measures into rural development initiatives. IFAD has developed a regional strategic opportunities paper for the Eastern Caribbean countries and Trinidad and Tobago with a view to identifying common problems and potential solutions within the region.

I. Tourism resources

54. In the area of tourism, IFAD is currently funding a Saint Lucia-based NGO for a training programme in natural resources and eco-tourism in the islands of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Initiated in 2000, the project's objectives are to identify forms of community-based tourism development that contribute to rural development and to identify processes for a meaningful participation of communities in the development and management of tourism ventures in support of rural development. A regional training workshop on community-based tourism and a regional seminar on policy requirements for integrating tourism into rural development policies are among the activities undertaken in conjunction with the project. UNEP, among other activities, co-sponsored with the World Tourism Organization the International Conference on

Sustainable Tourism in the Islands of the Asia-Pacific Region, held in Sanya, China, in December 2000. The Conference emphasized the need for integrating planning for tourism with national development and resource management plans; the role of the various stakeholders and the need for cooperation among them; tourism planning and management in sensitive natural and cultural sites; the responsible use of natural resources in tourism; and the importance of professional training, capacity-building and research programmes.

55. In the framework of the International Year of Ecotourism, 2002, designated by the United Nations, the World Tourism Organization is organizing a series of regional preparatory conferences. Within this context, a conference specially designated to examine the sustainable development and management of ecotourism in small island developing States and other islands will be held in Seychelles in December 2001. Two other regional ecotourism conferences are planned in the Asia-Pacific region and will be held in Maldives and Fiji, respectively. In addition, the World Tourism Organization organized a seminar on sustainable tourism and competitiveness in the islands of the Mediterranean in Capri, Italy, in 2000. The seminar concluded, inter alia, that opting for a sustainable approach to tourism in Mediterranean islands entails institutional leadership, coordination with private sector, social involvement and skilled technical backing, and that to enhance competitiveness among islands in the region it is essential to focus the tourism strategy on the assets, peculiarities and capacities of each island and integrating a diversified supply of tourism attractions and services.

J. Energy resources

56. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued the implementation of numerous projects in the field of new and renewable energy in many small island developing States, and in cooperation with AOSIS organized a workshop in Cyprus in January 2001 to discuss issues relating to energy, sustainable development and small island developing States, and to share regional perspectives and project ideas. UNIDO provided support to small island developing States in research, development and utilization of renewable sources of energy as well as in efficiency promotion of existing technologies, and in July 2001, UNDP Trinidad will initiate assistance to 16 CARICOM countries in implementing a regional GEF project on development of renewable energy. This project is expected to lead to a full-phase GEF project on energy, efficiency and conversion to renewable energy.

57. At the regional level, OAS provided technical support to the Caribbean islands for renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. The Renewable Energy Inter-American (REIA) Conference, held in Washington, D.C., in December 2000, offered leading energy decision makers the opportunity to share best practices and learn from the experience of others regarding the use of renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies. The Conference also furthered the growing network of energy sector representatives linked by the REIA initiative.

58. At the national level, the Government of Fiji has reported the undertaking of numerous projects, particularly in the field of renewable energy and energy conservation. These include, inter alia, a biofuel project, funded by the South Pacific Forum secretariat, which will start in late 2001. Its main objective is to provide power to one village.

VI. Towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development

59. In December 2000, the General Assembly decided to organize a summit to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development agreed 10 years ago at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be held in June 2002 in Johannesburg. The overall goal of the Summit is to regenerate, at the highest political level, the global commitment to sustainable development. The General Assembly stressed that the preparatory process and the Summit itself would provide for an active involvement of all stakeholders. The Commission on Sustainable Development is acting as the preparatory committee for the Summit. A high-level steering committee has been established, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and including the heads of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNEP, UNDP and the Department for Public Information. As task managers for the issues raised by Agenda 21, most of the United Nations agencies will play an active role in preparations for the Summit.

UNEP and UNDP will be collaborating with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions to support the regional preparatory meetings as well as national-level preparations. The Department has scheduled an interregional preparatory meeting on small island developing States for 2002.

60. In preparation for the Summit, ECLAC and UNEP formally concluded an agreement for the convening of preparatory meetings at the regional and subregional levels. The subregional preparatory meeting for the Caribbean was to convene in Havana on 28 and 29 June 2001, while its regional counterpart for the Latin American and the Caribbean region will convene in Rio de Janeiro in October 2001. As a contribution to the subregional meeting and the Summit process, the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean will present a comprehensive publication on, inter alia, the progress of the Programme of Action in the Caribbean subregion to date and by country.

61. To assist Caribbean countries in preparing for and reaching consensus in the lead-up to international meetings, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the UNEP/Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean provided substantive and financial support to a meeting of CARIFORUM ministers organized by the CARICOM secretariat and held in Belize City in January 2001. UNDP Trinidad, in collaboration with the Caribbean Sustainable Economic Development Network, is playing an active role in analysing the region's sustainability in preparation for the Summit.

62. The Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific organized a workshop in Apia, Samoa, in June 2001 as part of the regional preparations for the Summit. Countries exchanged views on their national activities and discussed the capacity required to participate effectively in the Summit.

63. At the national level, Bahrain has established a follow-up committee on the implementation of Agenda 21, taking into consideration the Programme of Action. The Committee is composed of representatives of relevant governmental agencies. It is currently undertaking the national review and assessment of the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21, and is expected to formulate an integrated vision for national action plans. In addition, Bahrain is currently undertaking preparations for a national environmental strategy and for its national environmental plan of action.

VII. Conclusions

64. The reports received indicate that the organizations of the United Nations system have continued, within their relevant mandate, to address issues relating to the Programme of Action. A number of United Nations bodies have been engaged in assisting small island developing States in their efforts to deal with globalization and trade liberalization, particularly within the context of WTO negotiations, but the cumulative record of activities in the field of information and communication technologies indicates that insufficient attention has been paid to this priority area. Although SIDSNet continues to be seen as a successful activity of the United Nations system in the implementation of the Programme of Action in general, it has not received sufficient funding to continue its functioning and is in serious need of financial support. The contributions of Germany, Italy and Norway have only assured SIDSNet of funding through June 2001.

65. The issue of vulnerability is being addressed through the ongoing efforts of several United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. UNCTAD, SOPAC and the Joint Task Force on Small States (World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat) have carried out much important research. It is clear that the work has not yet progressed to a stage where a definitive ruling can be made on the application of a vulnerability index or indices. While the deliberations of the Committee for Development Policy have been informed by the progress so far in the work on economic and environmental vulnerability indices, the lack of available data for all countries, in particular for all small island developing States, makes a conclusive statement in favour of any particular methodology at best premature.

66. Limited information was obtained from non-United Nations regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies and from national sources. Indeed, in order to enable an accurate assessment of activities undertaken at various levels it will be important for small island developing States authorities, with the assistance of their partners, to undertake an impact assessment of all actions taken at the national level, which would also help prospects for replication in other countries and regions.

Annex

List of bodies, organizations and Governments that responded to the request for inputs to the present report

Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Environment Programme

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

International Fund for Agricultural Development

World Meteorological Organization

World Trade Organization

International Civil Aviation Organization

International Maritime Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Economic Commission for Africa

Global Environment Facility

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Alliance of Small Island States

Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change

South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission

Organization of American States

South Pacific Forum secretariat

Convention on Biological diversity

* * *

Australia

Bahamas

Bahrain

Canada

Denmark

Fiji

Palau